

Guide to the Collins Family Papers

68.8

Special Collections
Benjamin F. Feinberg Library
Plattsburgh State University College
Plattsburgh, N. Y. 12901

By
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Revised by
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Introduction

This collection was donated by Mrs. Benjamin Wessel and Benjamin Allen in 1968, and centers around the Alonzo Collins family. Most of the correspondence is between members of the Collins family (primarily Mary "May" Collins) and friends and relatives living out-of-state. Therefore, relatively little information is available about the Collins or the North Country even though the Collins resided in Clinton County,

Born in St. Lawrence County in 1813, Alonzo Collins moved to Clinton County around 1850 and purchased land in the northern part of Plattsburgh near the Beekmantown border. By 1898, his land holdings consisted of 1010 acres, 210 of which were used for farming, the remainder being pasture and timberland.

Alonzo married Julia Addoms (b. 1830), the daughter of John Townsend Addoms, a well known North Country Methodist Episcopal minister, and grand-daughter of John Addoms, a prominent Clinton County merchant. Alonzo and Julia had six children: Harriet, Bertha, Fred, Mary, Ernest, and Ida.

The major correspondent is Fred C. Johnson, a traveling miner, who worked throughout the United States and Canada. He was in love with Mary Collins and he wrote to her for twelve years about life in the various mining camps where he worked. He discusses such topics as the mining riots in Colorado, the Congressional dispute over gold and silver values, the Alaska border dispute with Russia (1899), and his trip to the Yukon. Most of his letters are in folders 6-17.

The second major correspondent is Emer Corey, who lived in Bismark, North Dakota, and worked for the Justice Department and was a cousin of Mary Collins. His letters, the majority of which are in folders 3-5, are primarily concerned with personal and family matters.

The Collins papers give the reader a sense of the manners and lifestyles of the late nineteenth century, with an emphasis on miners and mining camps.

Background Sources in Special Collections

Guide to the Addoms Family Papers, 68.7

Clinton County Farmer, 28 May, 1898

Genealogy of the Addoms Family: Special Collections File 85/3

Hurd, Duane H.. History of Clinton and Franklin Counties, New York. Philadelphia: J. W. Lewis, 1880.

Contents

Housed in two upright Hollinger boxes, the Collins Papers fill 31 folders. Correspondence is contained in folders 1-18 and is arranged in chronological order. Folders 19-31 contain business papers of various members of the Collins and Addoms families. Deeds and mortgages relating to Clinton and St. Lawrence counties are in folders 24 and 25.

BOX 1: Correspondence 1847-1898

Folder

1/1: 1847 - 1879 (12 items)

1/2: 1880 - June 1884 (16 items)

1/3: July 1884 - 1885 (14 items)

1/4: 1886 (14 items)

1/5: 1887 - 1889 (12 items)

1/6: 1890 - 1891 (14 items)

1/7: 1892 (22 items)

1/8: Jan. 1893 – Jun. 1893 (17 items)

1/9: July 1893 - Dec. 1893 (18 items)

1/10: 1894 (19 items)

1/11: 1895 (9 items)

1/12: 1896 (10 items)

1/13: 1897 (11 items)

1/14: 1898 (12 items)

Box 1 Items Total: 200

BOX 2: Correspondence 1899-1904

2/15: 1899 (10 items)

2/16: 1900 (19 items)

2/17: 1901 - 1904 (13 items)

2/18: Addoms Family (7 items)

2/19: Manning House (7 items)

2/20: Addoms & Dunning Bills: Jan. -Mar. 1814 (19 items)

2/21: Addoms & Dunning Bills: May. - Dec. 1814 (30 items)

2/22: Addoms & Dunning Bills:1815, undated (6 items)

2/23: Accounts & Receipts (24 items)

2/24: Indentures, Deeds & Mortgages: St. Lawrence Co. (8 items)

2/25: Indentures, Deeds & Mortgages: Clinton County (23 items)

2/26: Cancelled checks 1872 - 1893 (106 items)

2/27: Correspondence - fragments (6 items)

2/28: Newspaper clippings (8 items)

2/29: Business papers: Collins (3 items)

2/30: Court claims (4 items)

2/31: Miscellaneous (6 items)

Box 2 Items Total: 293

Number of items:

Box 1: 200

Box 2: 293

TOTAL 493